

H0-111
Happy Retreat
Woodbine
Private

circa 1781

Happy Retreat faces south on the south side of Union Chapel Road, two miles west of its intersection with Route 97.

The house has been constructed in three sections. A four bay wide, one room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running north-south) stone house with 30 inch thick walls, east and west entrances and wide, central cooking fireplace on the north wall may well antedate the revolutionary war. Along the south wall of this building was constructed a three bay wide, two room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running east-west), brick (now covered with poly-ethelene and painted white) federal house facing south with wide brick chimneys inset into its east and west walls. The south elevation of the federal house features an open bible and cross paneled double entrance door, surmounted by a rectangular octagonally curvilinear, four light transom. Fenestration for both sections of the house is rectangular, double-hung, vertically aligned and proportionally scaled.

"Happy Retreat" is notable as the home of Colonel Richard Dorsey who served General Washington during the Revolutionary War and retired here to build this house adjoining his brother John Dorsey who built his house at Mt. Calvary Church, now known as New Years Gift.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

HO-111
District 4

MAGI # 1401117904

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

"Happy Retreat"

Not for general
publication

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATIONSTREET & NUMBER
McNeal RoadCITY, TOWN
Woodbine

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
6thSTATE
MarylandCOUNTY
Howard**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☒ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

"Happy Retreat"

CITY, TOWN

Woodbine,

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hall of Records

Tax Map 14,
p.63

Liber #:161

Folio #:359

STREET & NUMBER

Howard County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1977

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Maryland Historical Trust

CITY, TOWN

21 State Circle, Annapolis

STATE

Maryland

7 DESCRIPTIONHO-111
District 4**CONDITION**☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Happy Retreat faces south on the south side of Union Chapel Road, two miles west of its intersection with Route 97. The entrance road to the house proceeds south 4/10 of a mile. A turn east at this point of the entrance road leads you some 3/10 of a mile to the location of the house and its auxiliary buildings.

The house has been constructed in three sections. Initially a four bay wide, one room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running north-south) stone house with 30 inch thick walls stood here. The downstairs was divided but the upstairs was on large room, which was only entered by ascending a ladder, located just north of the east entrance which was placed in the first south bay of that elevation. This entrance has been widened and now holds a double, rectangular, two-two light entrance door. A wide stone and brick chimney is inset into its north wall which held only two four light attic casement windows. The large stone cooking fire place features a wide flat wooden lintel and 8½' by 3' stone hearth composed of a single huge stone slab.

Fenestration is proportionally scaled vertically aligned, rectangular, and double-hung; the first floor windows hold nine-over-six lights, while the second floor windows hold six-over-six.

A west rectangular entrance is located in the second north bay of that elevation. The first floor of this section of the house now holds an entrance vestibule at the east entrance (powder room lies beyond), from whose north wall one enters into the large and charming room of the original stone house. Where upstairs there was only one room with mantle piece on its north wall, featuring flat pilasters and rather simple unadorned architrave and mantle shelves, there now runs a north-south hallway along the east wall with rooms to the west.

Very early a federal brick wing was added along the south wall of the house. This is noteworthy for the south wall is only some 14 inches thick while the east, west and north walls measure some 30 inches thick. The federal section is a three bay wide, two room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running east-west) brick (now covered with polyethylene and painted white) structure with wide brick chimneys inset into its east and west walls. That on the west is totally centered, while that on the east is north of center.

The south elevation holds an open bible and cross paneled double-entrance door, surmounted by a rectangular, octagonally curvilinear, four light transom, located in the east bay of this wall. Two rectangular, double-hung first-floor windows are placed in the central and west bays of this wall with three proportionally scaled and vertically aligned second floor windows holding six-over-six lights placed above.

The south entrance leads into a hall which features a fine staircase with square, tapered spindles. The living room, located west of the hall features an unusually fine federal mantle piece in its north west corner, featuring an architrave decorated with central oval, flanked by two rising suns with ovals decorating the flat capitals of the pilasters flanking the mantle. Wide, random width pine floors are also evident in this section of the house, which dates from at least 1798. Two

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

rooms with corner mantles occupy the northern half of this section of the house which was initailly totally separated from the second floor of the stone house. The second floor plan is similar to the first floor with attic above.

Sometime in 1939 this property was acquired by the present owner, Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV. Photographs in her possession picture the house with very sparce growth and almost no landscaping, in a neglected state.

Through the years the house has been totally renovated and a service wing added on its north wall. A stone patio and green house have been placed along the west wall of the old stone house and lawns, shrubbery and boxwood lend charm and character to one of Howard County's most significant architectural and historical landmarks. Designed and executed by John Whitcomb, an architect and family member, the intersecting gable roof additions add, rather than detract from the integrity of the building and its site. The gable roof (running north-south) of the stone house has been extended one bay in brick and a two bay wide, two story high, intersecting gable roof (running east-west), (north-south) brick "L" added to this. This latter section serves as a service wing for the remainder of the house. A two car garage lies north, with tennis courts, log house and large frame barn resting on a stone foundation east of the house.

The one and a half story high, gabled roof (running north-south) log cabin features a wide central east entrance, two first floor, six-over-six light west windows, a wide stone exterior chimney on its north wall and interior staircase on its south wall. The floors of the loft and first floor are some 12 inches wide.

All the buildings and grounds of the house are in the most excellent condition and highest level of maintenance.

It is the wish of the owner that this information be used for state and county government record only and not for general publication. Only one negative each, of some five photographs, is on public record and are filed in Annapolic in the archives of the Maryland Historical Trust.

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1781

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Happy Retreat is historically and architecturally significant. Historically it is associated with Colonel Richard Dorsey who received a personal request from General Washington to organize a troop of horse, and joined Colonel Moses Rawlin's Regiment of Riflemen.

Architecturally it is an exceptionally well preserved and maintained eighteenth century stone and brick house, whose stone section may well antedate the revolution. In addition its two story high, three bay wide brick house is double pile in its organization, rather than one room deep as many Howard County homes later became, particularly those of the early to mid nineteenth century. This house, along with Cherry Grove, 1765 and the old Red House Tavern in Cooksville are representative of the early to mid seventeenth century architecture in Howard County. Historians believe the house to have been constructed after the Revolutionary War ended. This is true of the brick section. The stone section, however, probably was constructed prior to the revolution. By 1798 the entire house as we see it today, less the new twentieth century service wing, was constructed. Lieutenant Richard Dorsey became a colonel after the war and built "Happy Retreat" where he retired. An old paper noted in J.D. Warfield's Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland states:

State of Maryland to Richard Dorsey, Lieutenant in Colonel Moses Rawling's Regiment of Rifle men, 1774 January 24th,	£ 57	10s	9d
Credit Amount paid at Phil.	10	2	6
To 7 years, 8 months interest	£ 47	8	3

Mr. J.D. Warfield then states that his silver spurs "are now held by his grand son, Richard Dorsey of "Rockland" and that "his sword was given to his son Caleb. Colonel Dorsey married Anne Wayman late in life. They had seven boys and five daughters.

Historically and architecturally significant to Howard County and the State of Maryland, it is presently owned by Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV who wished to lead a private life and have no publicity for the house. Photographs taken in 1972 are in the archives of the Maryland Historical Trust. No further photographs were taken at the date of this survey, at the request of the owner.

August, 1978. It is the wish of the owner that this survey be used for State and County use only and not for general publication. Since part of the land on which "Happy Retreat" stands was once considered for the expansion of Tridelphia Reservoir, it is important that the property be identified for

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Significance page 2

planning purposes. In the future, should the owner desire placement of the property on the National Register of Historic Places, this outstanding building would surely qualify for such inclusion.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Mrs. Augustus Riggs, IV at "Happy Retreat", September 1, 1978.
J. D. Warfield. Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland
Baltimore, 1973, p.450

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 360 Acres

Please see Attachment 1, Tax Map 14

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please see Howard County Record Liber 161, folio 359.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE Maryland COUNTY Howard

STATE _____ COUNTY _____

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Cleora Barnes Thompson, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Planning & Zoning-Comprehensive Planning Section

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

3450 Court House Drive

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Ellicott City

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

H0-111
140117904

Happy Retreat
Union ~~Street~~ Road, Woodbine
Chapel

did not visit -
located on map by
Mr + Mrs. E.W. Gramkow
7/21/70

Augustus Riggs IV

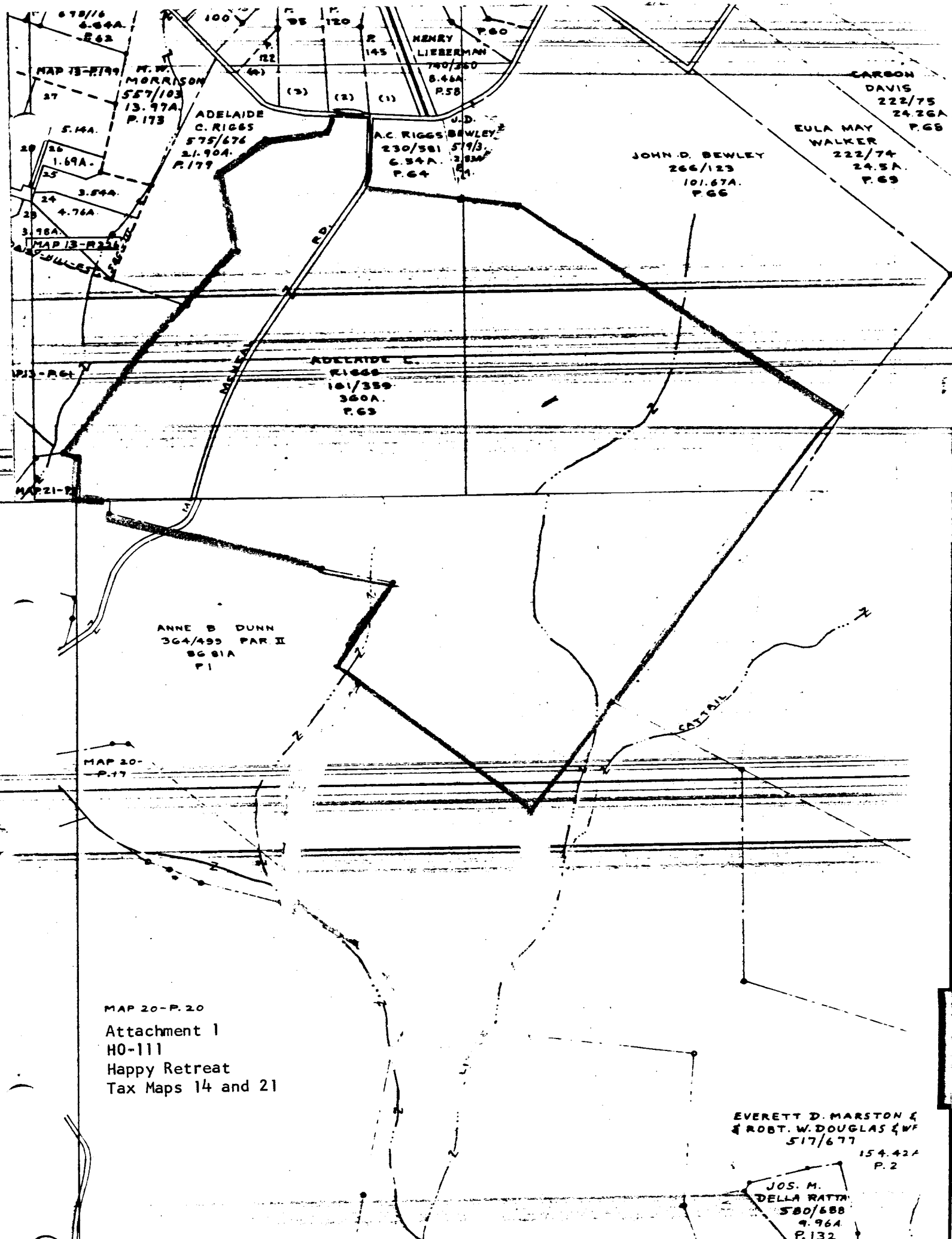
for Map # 14

Adelaide C. Riggs

161 / 359

360 A

p. 63



MAP 20-P. 20
Attachment 1
H0-111
Happy Retreat
Tax Maps 14 and 21

EVERETT D. MARSTON &
ROBT. W. DOUGLAS & WF
517/677
154.424
P. 2

JOS. M.
DELLA RATTI
580/688
9.964
P. 132

Attachment 2
H0-111
Happy Retreat
U.S. Geological Survey Map
Woodbine, Maryland
Quadrangle Scale 1:24000

FLOOD PRONE AREA



Ho III

166A

Hobbs Retreat

SE 6/7

from the north



Ho. 111

166A

from the south

Hobby Retreat

186 6/72



HO. III

166A

Happy Retreat guest house



HO-111

Happy Retreat

Jean Ewing

6/1972

166A



Ho. III

view
to the west

166A

Happy Retreat

JSZ 6/72